

## **H.R. 6344, the LOCAL Act**

Rep. Scott Tipton (CO-03)

### **Allow & Incentivize Voluntary Conservation under Endangered Species Act**

*“While the Endangered Species Act doesn’t prevent voluntary conservation efforts, it certainly doesn’t encourage them”*

Dear Colleague:

While the Endangered Species Act (ESA) doesn’t prevent voluntary conservation efforts, it certainly doesn’t encourage them.

For this reason, species conservation experts and policy powerhouses alike have recommended for decades that the Act be amended in order to codify incentives and set clear statutory channels for recognizing such voluntary efforts.

Since species conservation is the ultimate aim of the ESA, and a greater sum total of voluntary, successful species conservation efforts incontrovertibly aid that aim, it is nothing more than common sense that such channels facilitating and encouraging voluntary conservation be a part of the Act.

This legislation would do just that, codifying several longstanding practices and regulatory language which facilitate voluntary conservation, including Species Recovery Agreements (SRAs) and Habitat Reserve Agreements (HRAs). Each of these kinds of agreements between the Secretary and other entities have distinct applications and structures and are most successful at facilitating species recovery under different circumstances, but what they have in commons is the increased leverage and more diverse toolkit they provide the Secretary in making decisions for the best interests of an endangered species.

The second component of this bill sets up another set of new incentives and opportunities for voluntary conservation by establishing a private party conservation grants program, and a habitat conservation planning loan program for state and local governments. Under each of these programs, the Secretary will have the flexibility to directly make expenditures and loans which are demonstrated to increase species and habitat conservation.

Such necessary conservation would take place at a higher price if such grants and loans are not authorized, because these programs will rely on existing expertise and plans that would require extensive new investment and planning if performed by the federal government. As such, these programs actually save money while boosting conservation.

With questions or to support this bill, contact [liz.payne@mail.house.gov](mailto:liz.payne@mail.house.gov) and [jeff.small@mail.house.gov](mailto:jeff.small@mail.house.gov) (Western Caucus).

Sincerely,

Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress